

INTERNATIONAL CODE OF ZOOLOGICAL
NOMENCLATURE: AMENDMENT PROPOSED TO THIRD
EDITION: PROPOSAL CONCERNING ARTICLE 51c.
Z.N.(S.)2474

By R. J. Gagné & F. C. Thompson (*Systematic Entomology Laboratory, USDA, c/o U.S. National Museum, Washington D.C. 20560, U.S.A.*)
and L. V. Knutson (*II B III USDA, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, West Beltsville, Maryland 20705, U.S.A.*)

Article 51c of the Code prescribes the use of parentheses in new combinations. If a species-group taxon was described in a given genus and later transferred to another, the name of the author of the species-group name, if cited, is to be enclosed in parentheses.

2. When recombinations were rarer than they are today, this convention may have been useful to indicate whether a researcher needed to consult other combinations than the current one. Now, when combinations different from the original are in the majority, in some groups approaching 100% of included species, and when species are indexed either by specific epithet or present combination, use of the parentheses is superfluous.

3. Use of the parentheses is expensive and time consuming. The Insect Identification and Beneficial Insect Introduction Institute, SEA, AR, U.S. Department of Agriculture, is ultimately responsible for checking all insect names in departmental manuscripts and reports. Parentheses are among the items checked. Often, research entomologists of that Institute are asked to provide just that information, which is of no interest to the writers or readers of the reports. The Institute has also found that computer programming is more expensive with this convention because the opening and closing parentheses add a complication when retrieving authors' names.

4. Although the convention is generally adhered to, notable exceptions to its use exist in the scientific literature without adverse effect. Lindner, E., 1926–present, and Crosskey, 1980, have dispensed with it. In the latter case, a taxonomic catalogue, the original genus, if different from the current genus, follows closely the species citation, so enclosing an author's name in parentheses seems superfluous. But in Lindner, 1926–present, the names of authors of specific taxa that should have parentheses have none even in discussions or figure captions. To quote from Crosskey, 1980: 'The editors . . . hold the view that Article 51c of the [second edition of the] Code is one of its most negative, and therefore useless requirements — its only effect is to convey the rather worthless information that a species no longer remains in the genus where it was first placed. Much valuable research time has been wasted

by specialists in searching out 'whether the author's name should be in brackets', and mandatory Article 51c should in our view be eliminated from the Code or reduced to the status of a recommendation for revisionary works alone'.

5. We strongly agree with Crosskey and propose that Article 51c of the third edition be deleted from the Code because it serves a negligible purpose incommensurate to the time and labour involved. We do not feel that the convention should be maintained even as a recommendation because we prefer uniform application.

REFERENCES

- CROSSKEY, R. W. (edit.) 1980. Catalogue of the Diptera of the Afrotropical region. *Brit. Mus. (nat. Hist.)*, London, 1437 pp.
- LINDNER, E. (edit.) 1926–present. *Die Fliegen der palaearktischen Region*. Stuttgart (Schweizerbart).